

Pia Desideria.

O R,

The Smoaking Flax,
raised into a Sacred Flame ;
In a Short and Plain ESSAY
upon those

Pious Desires,

Which are the *Introduction* and
Inchoation of all

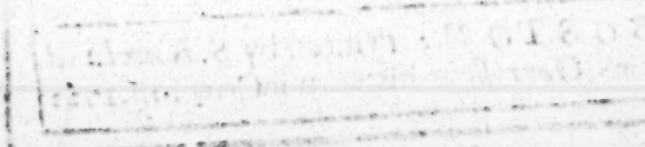
Vital PIETY,

Delivered unto a Religious SOCIETY
of YOUNG PEOPLE ; On the
LORD's-Day-Evening, Aug. 5. 1722.

*Valentiores Voces apud Secretissimas
Aures Dei, non Verba fatiunt sed
Desideria.* Gregor. Moral.

*In Qualitate Desiderii potest mens
Honesta Cognosci.* Cassiodor.

BOSTON : Printed by S. Kneeland
for S. Gerrish, at his Shop in Cornhill. 1722





THE Smoaking Flax.

NEHEMIAH I. 11.

*Thy Servants, who DESIRE to
Fear thy Name.*

IT is to be hoped, the *Desires* will be enkindled at and from the Hearing of them ; the Word that is now to breath upon us, will blow up the *Fire of GOD*. It is to be hoped, some Children of GOD, among the Hearers, will find the *Comforts* that belong to the *Servants* of GOD, reaching to them. I hope we shall have a very *Desireable Interview* !

Among the People of GOD, returned from their Captivity, it was yet a *Day of Small Things*, yea, a *Day of Sad Things*. The Report hereof reached unto a Countryman of theirs, who was at this time a considerable Officer in the Court of *Persia* ; and the more considerable, because the famous *Esther*, a Countrywoman of

theirs, was, as I apprehend, at this time the Queen of *Perſia*. His Name was *Nebemiah*; and as was his Name, so was he unto them, a *Comforter from the Lord*: But most notably their *Comforter*, when he became their *Governour*. In order to the happy Revolution which brought on a Revival of the Jewish Affairs, by *Nebemiah's* having the *Royal Commission* for their Government, we find this Great and Good Man, first making his most Solemn Supplications unto his *GOD*. We have here, a *Prayer for Mercy*, and a *Plea for the success of the Prayer*. The *Plea* is, 'Tis the *Prayer of thy Servants*. If we *Serve the Glorious GOD*, He will *Hear our Prayer*. If we *Serve GOD* in our *Walk*, He will *Hear us* when we *Seek Him in our Prayer*. By *Serving* of the Glorious *GOD*, we take a ready way to prosper in our *Praying* unto *Him*. The *Servants* of such a *Lord* will find *Him Willing* to answer their *P. titions*. If we don't say, *It is in vain to Serve GOD*, we shall never have cause to say, *What profit is it that we pray unto Him?* Let *Him have our Heart* and we shall have *His Ear*. Well, But we are very Defective in our *Service to GOD*. If we *Serve Him*, yet we also Sin against *Him*. Our *Sins Testify against us*, that we very little deserve to be esteemed the *Servants of GOD*, whose *Prayer* will find Acceptance with *Him*. Now to secure the Benefit of this

this Plea for us, behold the *Low Terms* on which it may be allowed unto us. Behold, The Character on which we may hope and claim to be Accepted, as the True Servants of GOD. And, Oh ! the *Divine Condescension* which will allow this Character to pass for our Title unto the Blessings to be expected by the True Servants of GOD ! A *Desire*, a *Desire*, to *Fear the Name of GOD*. If such a *Desire* be found in us, we shall be found among the True Servants of GOD ; and His *Ear will be attentive unto our Prayer*. Verily, *As a Man desireth in his Heart, so is he* ! You shall observe how our *Nebemiah* may be argued withal ; and what will be the Issue and Upshot of the Argument. Sir, What makes you think that God will *Hear you* ? His answer is, Because we *Serve Him*. Well, Sir, What proof have you, that you *Serve GOD* ? His answer is, *We Fear Him*. Well, Sir, What proof have you that you *Fear GOD* ? His answer is, *We Desire to do so*.

Our DOCTRINE will be such an One, that certainly we can say no other than this upon it ; *Lord, How sweet are thy Words unto my Taste ? Sweeter than Honey to my Mouth ! 'Tis this,*

The true Fear of GOD, is to be seen in a DESIRE to Fear Him.

You shall have it in other Words thus
Expressed unto you. *Pious DESIRES*
are an Evidence of PIETY. Soul, Be
thou able to say, *I Desire the Love of*
GOD, and it may be said, *He who knows*
all Things does know that thou Lovest
Him.

The first Thing that I have to do, is to
set before you the *Matter* of *Pious DE-*
SIRES; The Things which you are to *De-*
signe, if you have in you the Desires of *PIE-*
TY. My Hearers, *The Nets of Salvation*
are now spreading for you. What is aim-
ed at, is to draw you into the *Desires*
which you are now hearing of. Oh ! may
those *Desires* of *PIETY* be now formed in
you, which you are hearing of !

In the first place; *The Fear of GOD*; This, This is that which your *Pious Desires* must be carried forth unto.. Indeed *Fear* is usually the very *Reverse* of *Desire*. But behold a *Fear* that is the first and best *Ob-*
ject of *Desire*: *The Fear of GOD*; this
is, how *Desireable* ! Truly, 'tis more to
be *Desired than Gold, than much fine Gold*;
The Wisdom, of which all that are not
Fools, will subscribe to that Assertion, *All*
the Things which thou canst desire, are not
to be compared unto it. It is the *Desire* of
the Glorious GOD, concerning us; Deut.
V. 29. *O that there were such an Heart*
in them, that they would Fear me ! And
it must be our Desire to the Glorious GOD.

on:

on ou
the Fe
GOD
And
may l
Excell
I Hea
Glorie
Being
Lively
Impre
Glory
I bear
as to d
to say,
GOD,
be able
so Fear
Him.
is my
GOD a
to me, n
And th
Fearful
of the L
my self
OUR.
of GOD
would b
Name.
Second
will be a
GOD:;

on our own behalf ; Oh ! that I might have the Fear of God in my Heart ! The Fear of GOD has Excellent Things contained in it ; And our Hearty Desires must be that we may have all those Things in us, and even Excell in them. We must be able to say, I Heartily Desire, That I may Believe a Glorious GOD, and that the Belief of His Being and Attributes may be Real, and Lively, and Awful to me, and make strong Impressions on me : Fear GOD and give Glory to Him. We must be able to say, I heartily Desire that I may so Fear GOD as to depart from Evil. We must be able to say, I heartily Desire that I may so Fear GOD, as to keep His Precepts. We must be able to say, I heartily Desire that I may so Fear GOD, as in Truth to call upon Him. In fine, We must be able to say, It is my Hearty Desire, that the Fear of GOD and of His dreadful Wrath due unto me, may drive me unto my SAVIOUR : And that from an Apprehension of what a Fearful Thing it is to fall into the Hands of the Living GOD, I may by Faith cast my self into the Hands of my only SAVIOUR. All this is Comprised in the Fear of GOD ; All this is to be Desired if we would be those who Desire to Fear His Name.

Secondly ; Tho' there be a Fear, which will be cast out by Love, yet the Fear of GOD is the very same with the Love of GOD.

GOD. And this is what our *Pious Desires* must lead us to. A Devout Soul could say, Ps.l. CXVI. 1. *I Love the Lord, because He bath heard my Supplications.* And we should say, *My Supplications are that I may Love the Lord.* Our *Hearty Desire* must be this; *Oh! That the Perfections of the Glorious GOD, may appear so Amiable to me, as to make me Delight in Communion with Him, Delight in Obedience to Him, Delight in every Thing by which He may be Glorified; yea, Oh! Could I so far be swallowed up in Him, and with His Love, as to be glad when He is Glorified,* tho' there should be much of my own *Misery and Confusion in it.* But this *Love of GOD*, if we be Rooted in Love, will sprout forth into many *Branches of Devotion.* And our *Pious Desires*, are like *Birds of Paradise* to perch upon those Branches, and warble out their wishes, in such Notes as these; *Oh! may the Love of GOD cause me to repair unto my SAVIOUR, by whom alone I may be brought near, brought home unto GOD!* *May the Love of GOD cause me to mourn for, and to turn from, every thing that He may be offended at!* *May the Love of GOD, cause me to take every thing well that He does unto me, and take patiently every Cup that He shall appoint for me!* *And may the Love of GOD, cause me to Love my Neighbour, and fill me with all Goodness in my Temp-*

per

The Smoaking Flax:

7

per and Carriage towards Him. All this is to be Desired, if you would be found among the Lovers and Servants of GOD.

Thirdly; Here Life comes on. The *Life of GOD*, brings on the *Life of GOD*. And if our Pious Desires have any Life in them, they will mightily insist upon this, *Ob ! that I might Live unto GOD !* With all the Faithful, this is the very First-Born of their Desires ; Psal. CXIX. 37. *O Quicken thou me in thy Way.* If you would not proclaim yourselves Alienated from the *Life of GOD*, there must be such Pious Desires as these moving in you ; *Ob ! That I may so Live unto GOD, as to make it the Main Busines of my Life, to Serve & to Please Him ! Ob ! That I may so Live unto GOD, as to fetch the Relish of all my Enjoyments from their Subserviency to His Glory with me ! Ob ! That I may so Live unto GOD, as to depend entirely upon Him for all the Good, which many look unto the Creatures for.* Except all this be Desired, you are not the Servants of GOD, nor do you Live unto Him.

These are the Desires of PIETY. The Desires of the Righteous, which are only Good. Are your Hearts filled with such Desires ? Then Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye Righteous, and shout for Joy, because you will be found among the Upright in Heart. This is what I am now to give you some Demonstration of.

In

The Smoaking Flax.

In the Second place, I am to set before you the Comfort of these Pious DESIRES. The Fear of GOD is in them ; They are an Evidence of True PIETY in those that have their Hearts filled with them. To Demonstrate such a Comfortable Maxim, I have these things to say unto you.

First ; All the Good of the New Creature, begins in Good Desires. The New Creature may be called, *A Tree of Righteousness*. It is indeed so ; and it is the Planting of the Lord, that He may be Glorified. But this *Tree of the Lord* full of Sap, has a Root which it grows upon. The Grace of GOD, that Sanctifies the Soul, has taken Root in the Soul, when the Desires of that Grace, are Lodged and Fixed there. The Grace may be as Invisible, as the Root under Ground, when the Gracious Desires are first put into the Heart. *Ob ! That I were wiser and better, and in all things conformed unto the Will of GOD !* But an Heart that has these Pious Desires in it, may say with him, Job XIX. he, in 28. *The Root of the matter is found in me selves* When GOD comes to Convert a Soul unto our selves, He gives a New Bias, a Right that we Bias to the Soul. Now Pious Desires, these declare how the Soul is Biassed ; they and Relate it Inclined for GOD, and CHRIST. The First and PIETY. Breath is a Sign of Life. RIT of when a Soul begins to Breath, it begins to Live. In Pious Desires to Obey and Entertain that is to the Mar

The Smoaking Flax. 9

joy the Glorious GOD, there is the Breathing of a Renewed Soul. A Soul that is Livelily Breathing after GOD and after the Blessings of the New Creature, is doubtless Entivened from GOD. It was a thing once cried for, Lam. III. 56. *Hide not thine Ear at my Breathing, at my Cry. Soul, What's thy Breathing? Dost thou Breath at this rate; Oh! That the Rebellion of my desperately Wicked Heart against the Will of GOD, were all Extinguished!* Breath at this rate; Oh! That my ways were ordered in the Word of GOD, and no iniquity have Dominion over me! Breathe at this rate; Oh! That my SAVIOUR would shew me His Glory, and imprint His Glorious Image upon me! GOD hears the Breathing. There is a Cry in it; And a Cry which discovers a Life that will never Dy. Truly; There is the Holy SPIRIT of GOD, at work in such Pious Desires. We must all own, as he, in 2 Cor. III. 5. *We are not of our selves sufficient to think any thing, as of* ^{XIX.} *unto our selves.* Nor can we Desire any thing Right that we ought, and as we ought, of our selves. If there be so much as a Regular; they and Religious Desire in us, we may say, IRIE *The Finger of GOD is here; The SPI-
Life RIT of GOD is in it.* We must affirm, *The Desire of a Man is His Kindness;* and En that is to say, *The Kindness of GOD unto the Man.* Man, If thou hast any Desire of GOD

GOD, it is the Kindnes of GOD that has put it into thy Sou!. The Holy SPIRIT of GOD has been *Kind* unto thee, in so disposing of thee. We read concerning *Love*, and *Faith*, and *Goodness*; They are the *Fruits of the Spirit*. The *Pious desires of Love*, and *Faith*, and *Goodness*, are so too. The *Love*, the *Faith*, and *Goodness*, begin in the *Pious desires* thereof; (I may call them, *The Embrio of the New Creature!*) And are the *Fruits of the Spirit*, who *workest all in all*. Unto the *Spirit* of GOD at work in us, there are ascribed, *Groanings which cannot be uttered*. Christian, Thy *groans* after the *Attainments of PIETY*, may be so weak, and so dark, that they *cannot be uttered*. But still the *Spirit of GOD* is the *Author of these groans*. And if He be in them, what will they come to? O *Work of Grace*, It shall be unto thee, according to that Word; *Thy Beginning is but small; but thy Latter end shall greatly increase*. *Thy Beginning is in Pious desires*; But since the Holy SPIRIT of GOD is in these *Pious desires*, they will hold, and grow, and *increase*, and the *Latter End* will be a *perfection of Holiness in the Fear of GOD*.

Secondly; *Desires placed aright, and flaming aright*; there are *very great and precious Promises* made unto them. Indeed, it is most agreeable unto the Nature, and the *Tenour of the New Covenant*, that it should

The Smoaking Flax. II

should be so. The Old Covenant insisted upon this ; Do all that is Good ; And, Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the Law to do them all. And now, Lord, Who shall be Saved ? What will become of Sinners, who have departed from the Living GOD, and have put themselves under the Yoke of the Prince of the Power of the Air, and have suck'd in the Breath of the Spirit that works in the Children of Disobedience ? Truly, The Commandment which was ordained for to be unto Life, is found to be unto Death. But now, there is a New Covenant introduced. The Gospel comes in the room of the Law. And according to the Gospel, the Desire of Good, is owned as the Good. The Language of the Gospel is, Desire and Receive; Desire and Partake; Desire with thy Soul, that GOD may dwell in thy Soul, and thou hast Him there. And let the Promises in this New Covenant be hearkened to : A Delicious, an Heavenly Melody, and worth hearkening to ! What a sweet word is that ! Psal. X. 17. Thou bearest the Desire of the humble. The Humble are ashamed of themselves, to see how little PITY they have arrived unto : With shame they bemoan themselves, Alas, A Pious Desire, is the utmost that I can pretend unto ! Well ; But GOD will hear this Desire : The Regard of GOD unto it, will be Wonderful, Wonderful ! Pious Desires

B. simly express

express the *Appetites* of a Soul set for PIETY. But has He not *Promised*, That He will *satisfy the longing Soul*? Soul, Has thy GOD set thee a *Longing* with *Pious Desires* after an *Acquaintance* with Him, and after an *Union* with thy SAVIOUR, and after a *Victory* over the *Lusts* of thy *Flesh*? He has Promised that He will *Satisfy thy Longing*. He has expressly done so, in Mat. V. 6. *Blessed are they who Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*, for *they shall be filled*. What are *Pious Desires*, but an *Hungering* and *Thirsting after Righteousness*? The *Desires* of a Soul *Hungering* and *Thirsting* for more of GOD, and CHRIST, and Heaven, and of that PIETY which will bring us thither; these *Desires* will have the *Things proposed*; Yea, it has them in the very *Desires* of them; and it is a *Blessed Soul*. O *Blessed Soul*, Thou shalt be *filled with Good*. This was *Promised*, Isai. I. 19. *If ye be willing and obedient, yea shall Eat the good of the Land*. Believer, If thou art *Willing*, thou art *Obedient*; If thy *Pious Desires* do signify that thou art *Willing* to be what thou shouldest be, all the *Good of the Land of Promise* belongs unto thee. What a sweet Aphorism is that of the Apostle? 2 Cor. VIII. 12. *If there be a willing mind, it is accepted*. The *Pious Desires* of a *Willing Mind*, will find that our GOD, & Father, who is the *Father of Mercies*, will most Mercifully smile upon them. We

We will proceed now unto some Improvement of these *Faithful Sayings*, which doubtless you Count Worthy of Acceptation. The Improvement of these Things, and the Intention of our whole Discourse, must be, to *Enkindle* the DESIRES of PIETY among us. There is in the Eastern World at this Day, a Book Written more than Two and Twenty Hundred Years ago, the Title whereof is, *The Fire Kindler*, because it pretends to *Kindle the Fire of Piety*, in the Hearts of the Readers. The Aim of my Sermon is to be *A Fire-Kindler*: And verily, if the serious and genuine *Desires of Piety* may be now raised, there will be *Kindled* an inextinguishable *Fire of GOD*.

Wherefore,

I. What a *Conviction* are the *Strangers* to *Piety*, who have not so much as the *Desires* of it in them to be overwhelmed withal! O all you that are not the *Servants of GOD*, with Horror it may be spoken, You do not so much as *Desire to Fear His Name*. It is an Amazing Rebuke which belongs unto all them who are not come into the *Piety*, which does accompany *Salvation*; They have not so much as any *Pious Desires* operating in them. Of the Wicked, we read; Job. XXI. 14. *They say unto God, We desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The Children of Wickedness, do little *Desire to know*, but much less *Desire*

14 *The Smoaking Flax.*

to do, the Duty which they owe to the Glorious GOD. It is bad enough, that they cast off the *Practice* of *Piety*; but it is much worse, that they are without so much as the *Desire* of *Piety*. The Unbeliever makes those Exclamations against our SAVIOUR, Isai. LIII. 14. *There is no Beauty, but we should desire Him.* Far from Desiring; *My SAVIOUR is the Altogether Lovely One:* Oh! That I saw more of His Loveliness! Far from Desiring; *My SAVIOUR Purifies to Himself a People zealous of Good Works;* Oh! *That I might be among His Purified ones.* But can the Fear of GOD be in those, who do not so much as *Desire to Fear Him!* Let me a little Reason with you before the Lord. If you have any *Desires* of *Piety* in you, what and where are your Prayers for it? It is most certain, *For this every One that is Godly will Pray unto Him.* Even *For this;* that he may have a *Godly Heart,* and may lead a *Godly Life.* But there are some, who it may be can go from Day to Day, without any thing, that may be called *Praying unto GOD.* O *Prayerless Ones;* can it be thought, that you *Desire a Reconciliation with GOD,* when you don't count it worth so much as *Aasking for?* Do you *Desire Blessings* when the Great GOD never heard you say that you do it? Or, If you do in some sort of *Prayers* make a *Profession of Desires to Fear GOD,* What sort

Sort of *Prayers* are they ? How Formal, How Littleless, How little in Earnest ? Is a *New Heart* a thing so precious with you, that you *Ask* it with any Agony agreeable to the *Price*, or to your *Need* of it ? Some Sincere Souls, have made their *Confessions*, that before they became such, they Prayed that they might be reclaimed and rescued from their *Sinful Courses* ; but they were at the very time *Afraid* that GOD would hear their *Prayers*. O Ungodly Ones, *Going on still in your Trespasses* ; You have no *Desire* to be any better than you are ; no *Desire* to do any other than what you do. How *Inexcuseable* will you be found ; Oh ! how left without *Excuse*, in the Day when GOD shall plead with you ! How much in Vain ; Oh ! *Impenitents*, in vain will it be for you, to make this *Apology* ; *I was not able to Turn from Sin to GOD* ; nor able to close with my *SAVIOUR*. The Answer will proceed from the Mouth of thy Judge, with hot Thunderbolts ; *Wretch, Dost thou ever Desire of me to make thee able ?* No, never was there so much as a truly *Godly Desire*, or a *Desire* to be *Godly*, in a Soul so much *without GOD in the World*. O tremble to continue in this Condition !

II. What an *Encouragement* may be given to those, who have some *Symptoms* of *Piety*, in the *Desire* of it ! It was the Request made of old ; *Psal. LXXXVI. 17.*

Show me a Token for Good. It may be, O Servants of GOD; you have little more to shew what you are but this; *An Hearty Desire to be what you should be.* You durst not positively say, That you Fear GOD. But this you can say, *Lord, I Desire to Fear thy Name.* Even in this, GOD has shewn you a *Token for Good.* Of the Carnal Mind which is naturally in the Children of Men, we are sure, 'Tis Enmity against GOD, Is your Mind filled now with Pious Desires; with Desires to Converse with GOD; with Desires to Conform unto GOD? It may be hoped, that you have now in you, something besides a Carnal Mind; and that your Enmity against GOD begins to be Conquered. Perhaps many of you, have your Minds Exercised, about Approaching to the Table of the LORD. In your Self-Examination Preliminary and Preparatory to your Approaching to the Doing of this, you are in some Anguish to find and shew a Token for Good. Now, see whether in Pious Desires, you cannot find a Token. You durst not conclude, That you Believe; But can't you Heartily say, *Lord, I Desire to Rely on my SAVIOUR in all His Offices, for all His Benefits, and Clearly put my self under the Conduct of that Mighty Redeemer?* You durst not conclude, That you Repent. But can't you Heartily say, *Lord, I Desire to Abhor and Forsake every Sin, and patiently, yet,*

Thankfully.

The Smoaking Flax. 17

Thankfully to entertain every thing that comes to embitter my Sin? You durst not say, I Love Thee, O Lord my Strength. So small is the Strength of your Love. But can't you Heartily say, Lord, I Desire to draw near, and keep near unto Thee; I count it good for me to do so? You durst not say much of your Brotherly Kindness, and Charity. But can't you say, Lord, I Desire never to indulge the least motion of Envy and Malice, and Revenge towards my Brother! Your Holiness is very Imperfect; not very Conspicuous. But Holiness begins in a Desire to be the Lord's. Can't you say, Lord, I Desire that I and all that I have may be Devoted unto thy Service? Then go on Chearfully. Bring these Pious Desires to the Table of the LORD. You may go on, and come in, and Hope well, and say, Lord, my Desire is before Thee, and my Groaning is not hid from Thee. Come O Soul, and welcome to the Feast of GOD. Thou shalt find an Abundance of Mercy for thee in the House of thy GOD. You have to do with a Lord, of whom you are told; Mat.XII.20. *He will not quench the smoaking flax.* He will cherish those Pious Desires, which as yet make no more Figure than the Snuff of a Lamp, and have the stench of Infirmitie attending of them, which may render them worthy to be but as a Lamp despised. Yea, know it for your Ferial Consolation; your Pious Desires will be infallibly

18 *The Smoaking Flax.*

infallibly answered ; abundantly answered ; Eternally so. You shall *Fear GOD* as you Desire to do ; yea, and find the *Great Good* which He has *laid up* for them who do so. GOD that made them, and makes nothing in vain, has not laid of your Pious Desires, That ye shall *Seek Him in vain*. Before your GOD has done with you, He will give you the *Grace* you have *desired* & the *Glory* too ; O you that *wish Uprightly* for it ! He says to you, *Look unto me, & be Saved*. You can as yet give no more than a *Look* of Pious Desires. But this *Look* will bring on all that you Desire ; the End of it will be in the *Salvation of the Soul*.

III. But Care must be taken, that none of us may ly under any Soul Undoing *Delusion* ; that a *Deceived Heart* may not impose on any who are not aware of an *Heart Deceitful above all things* ; that *Peace* be not spoken unto those who are not the Children of *Peace*. Let us now receive some *Directions* upon this weighty Case.

What are the Marks to distinguish, those Pious Desires, which will show the Fear of GOD, & be an Evidence of Piety ?

Be sure, First ; Your DESIRES of Piety must be *Universal Desires*. They must extend as far as, *The whole Duty of Man*. There must be in them, a *Respect to all the Commandments of GOD*. You must say, as in Psal. CXIX. 128. *I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be Right.*

Again, Your DESIRES of Piety must be *Everlasting*

Everlasting Desires. They must not be like the *Morning Cloud and the Early Dew.* They must not be meerly in a Fit, in a Pang, as a Flash; Or while a *Chasining* is upon you. You must say, as in Psal.CXIX.

112. *I have inclined my Heart always to perform thy statutes, even to the end.* And why should I not say, your Desires of Piety must be *Sorrowful desires.* Desires attended with Sorrows for want of the *Piety*, which you Desire. Oh! Look on the Deficiencies of your *Piety*, & on what is *lacking in your Faith*, with a mournful Eye. Be like the Man, in Mar.IX. 27. who spoke it *with Tears*, when he brought his Desire, *Help my Unbelief.* Yea, Let all the Remainders of *Indwelling Sin*, make you cry out, *O wretched One that I am!*

There is One thing more to be wished; O may your Desires of Piety, be *Superior* Desires. Desire to get *Piety*, and grow in it, more than to get Riches, more than the gain of the whole World. The Rule is, Prov. II. 4, *Seek it as Silver, and search for it as for hid Treasures.* Come to such a Desire as this; *Lord, I more desire to carry it well when I am afflicted, and reap spiritual Advantages from it, than to be brought or kept out of Affliction.* Come to such a Desire as this; *Lord, I more desire to have a Sacrificing Heart, willing to part with every Thing, than to Enjoy those Good Things which are to be my Sacrifices.* Here is a Soul, that

that has the plain Signatures of Heaven upon it; the sure Beginnings of it.

Finally. Your Desires of Piety, must be Endeavourous Desires: There must be suitable Endeavours joined with them. It is a Memorable Word, Prov. XXI. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.* Desire without Labour, will never bring to Happiness. Meer wishers & woulders, they say, are no good Housholders. I am sure they are no good Christians.

In Ungodly People, there are some Desires of Happiness, & of some Things that Lead unto Happiness. A Balaam is not without a Desire, *Ob! That I may Dy the Death of the Righteous!* Our Saviour had some Ungodly Hearers, who upon His mention of the Bread that comes down from Heaven, had this Desire, *Lord, Give us evermore of this Bread.* An Ungodly Soul, may Desire the Pardon of Sin, the Favour of GOD, an Interest in a JESUS to deliver from the Wrath to come. The Terrors of an Awakened Conscience, will extort such Desires. But, alas, The Good Desires of Ungodly Ones, are Good for Nothing. And the Reason is, Because their Labours do not accompany their Desires. The Demand is, Phil. II. 12. *Work out your own Salvation.* The Demand is, Luk. XIII. 24. *Strive to enter the strait Gate.* The Demand is, Joh. VI. 27. *Labour for the Food that Endures to Everlasting Life.* O Souls Desirous of the Fear of GOD; It is worth Labouring for. You cannot have it, if you do not

coun

The Smoaking Flax.

21

count it so. Oh ! Labour to come at the *Piety* which you say you desire. Cry to the GOD of all Grace, with a *Laborious* & a most Repeated Agony : O Lord, I beseech thee, Deliver my Soul, & make precious Impressions of thy Grace upon my Soul ! Make an Importunate cry ; Follow the Lord with an Intestine Importunity. Never be at ease till you feel that with *Wrestlings* of GOD you have prevailed. And then, ply all the *Means of Grace*, with Assiduity ; At home, Abroad ; In Good Seasons, in Bad Seasons ; And Plough with this *Hope* ; It may be, It may be a gracious GOD may look down upon me. Think much of no *Labour* prescribed in the *Exercises of Piety*, that so you may obtain all the *Piety*, which the wishes of your Souls have their Eye upon. Then, O Soul mark'd for Heaven ; That Fear of GOD, which is now in thee, but as a *Grain of Mustard Seed*, will grow into marvellous Dimensions. Heaven is begun in thee, & thou mayst Rejoyce in the *Hope of the Glory of GOD*.

IV. TO have done. Methinks, One Word, for the Animation of *Early PIETY*, may now be pertinently & seasonably offered: One word, That our *Young People* may lift themselves among the *Servants of GOD*, with Desires to Fear His Name. Austin said, All the Life of a Christian, is made up of holy Desires. Be sure, *Early Piety*, & the Religion of Young People rises little higher than *Pious Desires*. But, O our *Young People*,

22 *The Smoaking Flax.*

ple, may there be so much at least found in you, of the *Good Thing* towards the Lord GOD of Israel : So much at least, as Pious Desires, after the Thing that is Good. Be able as Young as you are, to say unto the Glorious GOD, as in Isai. XXVI. 9. *With my Soul have I desired thee ; with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.* Child, There is a SAVIOUR, who is, *The Desire of all Nations.* Oh ! may He be the Desire of thy Soul. *May thy Desire be, Oh ! Great SAVIOUR, my I Know thee, & Have thee, & Serve thee, as my SAVIOUR.* And mayst thou carry this Desire to Him in thy Early Supplications. Thy SAVIOUR will cast a very kind Aspect on thy Pious Desires. He will say of them, *Let me hear thy voice in them, O my Dove ; Sweet, Sweet is thy voice unto me.* Shouldst thou go unto thy Father, and say, *Sir, I desire to approve my self a dutiful Child. I would fain be, what you would have me to be ; I pray you to help me in it :* Certainly, Thy Father will own thee for a Dutiful Child. Go to GOD, and say *O my GOD, I desire to follow thee, as One of thy Obedient Children ; Oh ! Help me Help me, to do so.* Certainly, This GOD will be thy Father. When a Young Ephraim goes to GOD with such a desire as this ; *Turn thou me !* GOD says, *This is a dear Son, This is a pleasant Child. I will surely have mercy on him.* *Z JY 61*

FINIS.

nd in
Lord
Pious
e able
Glori-
y Soul
within
re is a
l Na-
Soul.
OUR,
Serve
t thou
y Sup-
a very
e will
them,
e unto
, and
a du-
it you
o help
ll own
nd say
as One
p me
GOD
brain
is; O
a dea
l sur